

IN THE CLAIMS:

The following is a complete listing of the claims currently pending in the application:

1 – 25 (Canceled)

26. (Currently amended) A method of forming a coated metal strand for use in tires, comprising:

separating filaments of a twisted multi-filament metal strand from one another to form a space between the filaments;

coating each filament with liquid rubber material when the filaments are separated; and
re-twisting the filaments to reform the metal strand.

27. (Original) The method of claim 26 including applying a primer coating to the filaments prior to the coating step.

28. (Original) The method of claim 26 including applying a second coating of rubber material to the re-twisted strand.

29. (Original) The method of claim 28, wherein the second coating is applied by extrusion molding.

30. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 27, wherein the strand is one of a plurality of identical strands, and the method includes:

arranging the strands into a parallel group such that the axes of the strands are substantially in the same plane; and

applying a second rubber coating to the group to form a ribbon.

31. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 30, wherein the second rubber coating is extrusion molded to the strand.

32. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 30 including:

wrapping the ribbon around an object tightly such that the ribbon is adhered to itself by

cohesion to form a unitary tubular body; and
cutting the body to form a sheet of material.

33. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 32 including forming part of a tire with the sheet of material.

34. (Withdrawn) An apparatus for untwisting a strand of twisted filaments comprising a rotor, which has a central axis about which the rotor can rotate, wherein the rotor includes a plurality of separate passages, and filaments of the strand are fed through the passages, wherein the rotor separates the filaments from one another and produces a space between the filaments.

35. (Withdrawn) The apparatus according to claim 34, wherein the passages are parallel to the axis.

36. (Withdrawn) The apparatus according to claim 34, wherein the rotor is one of a plurality of identical rotors and the strand is one of a plurality of identical strands, and the rotors untwist the strands, respectively.

37. (Withdrawn) The apparatus according to claim 34, wherein a drive mechanism is provided for rotating the rotor about the axis.

38. (Withdrawn) The apparatus according to claim 34, wherein the rotor is one of a plurality of coaxial rotors for separating the filaments of the strand.

39. (Withdrawn) A strand coating apparatus comprising:
a strand separator mechanism, which includes a plurality of separate passages through which individual filaments of a strand pass to untwist the strand and to separate the filaments from one another, wherein the strand is re-twisted after passing through the strand separator mechanism;
a first coating device for applying a first rubber coating to the filaments while the filaments are separated;

a second coating device for applying a second rubber coating to the strand after the filaments have been coated by the first coating device and after the strand is re-twisted.

40. (Withdrawn) The apparatus of claim 39, wherein the second coating device is an extruder.

41. (Withdrawn) The apparatus of claim 39, wherein the separator mechanism is one of a plurality of identical separator mechanisms, and each separator mechanism separates the filaments of one of a plurality of strands that are coated in a parallel manner by the apparatus.

42. (Withdrawn) The apparatus of claim 41, wherein the second coating apparatus forms a ribbon in which the strands are parallel.

43. (Withdrawn) A strand coating apparatus comprising:

a strand separator means for separating and untwisting the filaments of a multi-filament, twisted strand from one another, wherein the strand is re-twisted after passing through the strand separator means;

a first coating means for applying a first rubber coating to the separated filaments;

a second coating means for applying a second rubber coating to the strand after the filaments have been coated by the first coating means and after the strand is re-twisted.

44. (Withdrawn) The apparatus according to claim 43 wherein the first coating means is a reservoir of liquid rubber material.

45. (Withdrawn) The apparatus of claim 43, wherein the second coating means is an extruder.

46. (New) The method of claim 27, wherein the primer coating is formed by plating.